

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Air Quality

SITUATION REPORT

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY

Aleutian Southwest Alaska #2017-03

LOCATION(S) IMPACTED: North Unalaska Island in the Aleutian Islands.

VALID TIME: Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 7:00 AM through Wednesday, February 1, 11:00AM

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: If necessary Wednesday, February 1, 11:00AM or if conditions change significantly and warrant a timelier advisory.

ADVISORY: Trace amounts of volcanic ash from eruptions of the Bogoslof Volcano dusted Northern Unalaska Island late last night. There are potential health risks from the ash on the ground, winds or human activity can cause ash to be re-entrained into the air. People with respiratory conditions should be aware for the potential of ash in their area, and to use caution.

VOLCANIC DUST AND PUBLIC IMPACT: Ash fall restricts visibility, and is a general nuisance. Individuals exposed to airborne volcanic ash may experience various eye, nose and throat irritation. Although ash can cause discomfort, short-term breathing of volcanic ash is not known to pose a significant health hazard for healthy individuals. However, exposure to ash can make breathing difficult for infants, the elderly and those with respiratory ailments. People with existing respiratory conditions, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma, are more at risk for developing acute respiratory symptoms from breathing volcanic ash. Anyone in these risk groups should be particularly careful to avoid exposure. Contact your health provider if you are concerned about symptoms.

DEC advises everyone to avoid unnecessary exposure to ash. Wear a disposable face mask outdoors to reduce inhalation of ash particles. Dust masks can be purchased at most hardware stores. Masks that seal to the face provide the best protection. Alternatively, a wet cloth or bandana placed over the mouth and nose can help reduce contact.

Contact lens wearers are advised to switch to eye glasses to reduce eye irritation from ash exposure. Wearing goggles can help to protect your eyes and wearing long sleeved shirts as well as gloves may be helpful. Remember that pets are also susceptible to all of these same symptoms, and should be kept indoors or sheltered from ash fall as well.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please visit the Alaska Volcano Observatory website at <http://www.avo.alaska.edu>

For more information on steps to take in the event of ashfall, visit the Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality Division, Volcanic Ashfall page at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/volcano.htm>.

Sign up to automatically receive Air Quality Alerts via email or Twitter at:

<http://dec.alaska.gov/Applications/Air/airtoolsweb/Home/Index>

For information on this advisory, contact Mark Smith, Division of Air Quality, (907) 269-7676 or State Cell Phone (907) 748-2142.

